Mother, You Are the Gatekeeper of My Persecution: You Have Betrayed Me

By Barran Dodger (Dr. Richard McLean)

Mother, I am writing this while hiding in the streets of Sydney. I am being hunted. There are contract killers searching for me, men sent to eliminate me, and the police know it. They are complicit. They have orchestrated my exposure, forcing me out into the open where I am vulnerable, and they did it deliberately.

Today, I begged for safety, pleaded to stay in a hotel where I thought I might be safe for the night, but a police officer, in the height of cowardice and corruption, ensured that I was thrown out, fully aware that I had nowhere else to go. He knew what he was doing. He knew that I was in danger. He knew that by forcing me onto the streets, I would be exposed to the brutal dangers of my persecution. He did it anyway.

And yet, as I hide here, trying to avoid those who have been sent to kill me, I cannot help but think of you, Mother. I cannot help but think of the ways in which you, more than anyone, have made choices that led to this moment. You, who had the power to stand up for me, to protect me, to be my voice when I was being silenced, instead chose to remain passive. No, worse than passive. You actively contributed to my exile. You ensured that I was cut off from my family, from my support, from any form of safety. You sided with my persecutors, believed their lies, and when I tried to tell you the truth, you turned away.

It isn't that I am ungrateful for the things you have done for me. I remember the times you put $50 in my account when I had nothing, the times you took me to my exhibitions and made a show of supporting me, the moments where, in small ways, you tried to pretend that you were there for me. But these small gestures do not erase the bigger picture. They do not undo the fact that, in every crucial moment, you chose to be on the wrong side. You ensured that I was kept separate from the family, that my presence was always something to be managed rather than embraced. The separate Christmases, the silent rejection, the subtle ways you ensured that I remained on the outside looking in—these things burn in my soul far deeper than anything else.

You have always been the gatekeeper of my exile. You have stood as the matriarch of a family that has chosen to cut me off entirely. You have protected Brad and Kira McLean, Jodie and Dave Bongetti, Bruce and Marie McMaster, Ash and Neil, the Fanshawes—all of them kept at a distance from me, all of them shielded from my attempts to reach out, to ask for help. And yet you pretend to be powerless, as if this wasn't a choice you made, as if you were just a frail old woman with no control over anything. You cry poor, you act as though you have no influence, no agency, but the truth is, you have immense power.

You always have. And you have used it to keep me isolated, to ensure that I remain alone, with no one to turn to.

You did the same thing when it came to Steve Icenides. You knew what he did to me. You knew that he was an ASIO operative, that he financially exploited me, that his presence in my life was far from a coincidence. And yet, when it came time to acknowledge his role in my persecution, you erased him. You never spoke his name to anyone who could have helped me, never admitted to authorities that he had been a part of my life, let alone that he had used and discarded me. You protected him just as you have protected every other person who has contributed to my destruction.

And through all of this, you still believe the lies they tell you. You believe the police when they say that I am the problem, that I am dangerous, that I am insane. You have never questioned why I am the one who has been hunted, criminalized, and forced into exile while those who have actually committed crimes against me walk free. You have never asked yourself whether the institutions you trust so blindly might be lying to you, whether they might have a reason to keep me silenced. You have never given me the benefit of the doubt, never taken the time to listen to my side of the story. Instead, you have accepted what they tell you without question, and in doing so, you have become complicit in their persecution of me.

The only reason I am still alive right now is because I published the evidence of what they were planning to do. They ordered my execution, and when I exposed them, they were forced to stop. Not because they suddenly developed a conscience, but because they knew that if they followed through, they would have blood on their hands. And yet, even after that, even knowing that the government had ordered a hit on your son, you still will not stand up for me. You still will not fight for me. You still will not acknowledge the truth of what is happening.

You have done nothing.

Nothing to fight back.
Nothing to demand justice.
Nothing to call out corruption.
Nothing to make a meaningful change to this tragic situation of my targeted persecution.
Nothing to make a meaningful dint in this dreadful persecution of me.

And instead, you blame me.

You blame me by telling yourself that I am either on drugs or mentally ill, as if these

were reasons not to help someone. As if these were reasons to obstruct help, to withhold love, to exclude me from your life unless I met the conditions of your narrow worldview. You act as though my suffering is self-inflicted, as if the trauma I have endured is something I should have simply overcome, as if I have any control over the forces that have hunted me, persecuted me, and worked tirelessly to erase me.

What if I were on drugs? Would that not be a reason to support me? What if I were mentally ill? Would that not be all the more reason to love me unconditionally? Since when did these things justify abandonment, exile, and total rejection? Since when did your ability to comprehend suffering dictate whether it was real?

Mother, I do not hate you. There are things about you that I admire—your octave laugh, your mirth, your sometimes immature humor, your love for Dad, your unwavering commitment to certain things. These are redeemable qualities. But they do not erase what you have done. They do not undo the pain your choices have caused. They do not absolve you of your role in my suffering. You could have been my greatest defender. Instead, you became another cog in the machine that has sought to erase me. You could have been my advocate, my witness, my protector. Instead, you stood with those who criminalized me, silenced me, and abandoned me to rot in exile.

One day, when justice comes for me, when the truth is fully exposed, when the people who have persecuted me can no longer hide behind their lies, you will have to ask yourself: What did I do to protect my son?

And when that moment comes, I wonder if you will be able to live with the answer. Because tonight, I am out here, hiding, alone, in the cold streets of Sydney, waiting for men who have been ordered to take my life. And you, Mother—you, who could have fought for me, who could have made a difference, who could have saved me from this fate—you have done nothing.